My dear Cath...

THE STORY OF AN ARMY DOCTOR'S WIFE
IN 1818 - 1819

by Anne Anderson

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Preface

WHEN Anne Anderson sat down in 1818 to write a letter full of cheerful gossip to her sister at home in Peebles, she can scarcely have imagined that her words would still be alive more than a hundred and fifty years later. They were preserved as part of the family record together with some other letters written by Anne and her husband, and survive to give us an unusual glimpse into the domestic circle of an army doctor of the period.

Anne Cairns, the daughter of a Peebles lawyer, was married to Andrew Anderson, surgeon in the 92nd Regiment (Gordons) in August 1818 at Portpatrick, Wigtownshire. She was twenty-four and her bridegroom nine years older.

Andrew Anderson, who came from a Selkirk family of surgeons, entered the army as a surgeon's mate in 1805, after studying at Edinburgh University. Medical students in those days often spent some time in the army as part of the training for their profession. In 1808 he was appointed assistant surgeon to the 79th (Cameron Highlanders) Regiment, and saw a good deal of service. He took part in the disastrous Walcheren expedition in the Low Countries, where fever decimated the British troops; he was present at the battle of Salamanca during Wellington's Spanish campaigns, where he found the marching and manoeuvring under heavy French fire rather unnerving, and saw a cannon ball go through the big drum that the bandsman was carrying on his back; and on another occasion, tending the wounded in the rear with his instruments spread out on a sheet, he moved further back only a moment before a ball ploughed up the ground where he had been. For serving in five campaigns in Spain he received the war medal with five clasps. He described the exhaustion of the troops after a long march, when the men would sink down on the spot when the word was given to halt, only rising when called to fetch their grog. Many a time he himself was thankful for three stones to keep him from the wet ground.

In the summer of 1812 Andrew Anderson was appointed surgeon to the 61st (South Gloucestershire) Regiment, from which he retired on half pay at the end of 1814. At that period, before the days of the Army Medical Service, the doctor was a regimental appointment. Surgeons wore regimental uniform and were members of the mess, but had no authority as regimental officers in the military sense. Their pay, and retired half pay, was that of their honorary military rank.

Three years later, having qualified M.D. at Edinburgh in

1816, Andrew Anderson returned to the army, as surgeon to the 92nd Highlanders. His reason for doing so has not emerged. There is a suggestion in the letters that financial considerations kept him in the army, although his pay as a surgeon, with the equivalent honorary rank of a major, would not give him a large income. It is obvious that he and his wife were looking forward to the time when they could settle down at Shawwood. In 1814 Andrew had inherited some ground at Shaw near Selkirk from his brother Alexander, who had accompanied Mungo Park on his second and ill-fated expedition to the Niger some years earlier. Their father had also owned ground in the vicinity.

Mungo Park's widow, to whom the second letter is addressed, was Andrew Anderson's sister Alison, then living at Stockbridge on the outskirts of Edinburgh. She had been left with four children, Mungo, Elizabeth, Thomas and Archibald. The 'Bell Anderson' referred to in the letters may have been her sister Isabella. Their brother Thomas was a surgeon in Selkirk. The Andersons and Mungo Park came from large families, and it is not possible to identify with certainty all the relatives mentioned in the letters, especially as nicknames seem to have been used for some of them. It is not known who Jane, the recipient of the third letter, was.

The Cairns family in Peebles was not quite so large, although some of the unidentified people mentioned in Anne's letters were probably family connections. Her parents James Cairns and Isabella Gray lived in the Bridgegate, near the centre of the town, and their other daughters, Catherine, Isabella and Nancy seem to have been living with them. Mr Cairns died in 1823 and his widow acted as postmistress, apparently using her own home; the plan of Peebles of that period shows the post office on the north side of the Briggate, as it is still called locally, and about half way down. Mrs Cairns was later described as 'a fine old lady' and 'a fine specimen of the old Scotch bourgeoisie', and one feels that she must have been a very cosy and agreeable person. She was succeeded as postmistress by her daughter Nancy, who married Dr James Williamson and was widowed early. The Briggate post office of Mrs Williamson's day has been recalled as a pretty house, covered with roses and creepers, with an entrance through a small but luxuriant garden, and a slit in the door to receive the letters. Nancy's grand-nephew Alexander Bathgate, reminiscing in New Zealand in the 1920s, remembered that she 'carried out her duties in her own house, a tiny room off the sitting room being used as the office where the stamps were kept with a pair of scissors handy to snip them off, for the perforation of the stamp sheets had not been invented then. The house was an old one, and several of the windows

had been built up. On my asking why it had been done she replied that it was done by her father to lessen the window tax in the days when that was in force'.

This, then, must have been the house, long ago demolished, in which 'dear Cath' read Anne's letter in 1818.

I am greatly indebted to Miss Alice Woodhouse, Mrs Barbara House and Miss Lorna Pears, who so readily made available the material belonging to their family and allowed me to use it; and to Colonel Jerry House, for sharing with me the results of his untiring research into the family history.

Thanks are also due to Mr W. A. Thorburn, Keeper of the Scottish United Services Museum, Edinburgh, for information on the historical background and the illustration showing a soldier of the 92nd Regiment; to Major General A. MacLennan, O.B.E., Curator of the R.A.M.C. Historical Museum, Aldershot, for information and the photograph of a case of surgical instruments of the period; and to Mr John Roney for the cover drawing.

SHEILA SCOTT.

Peebles, 1976.

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MY DEAR CATH . . .

To MISS CAIRNS, Briggate, Peebles.

CASTLEBAR, 6th November, 1818.

My dear Cath,

Your packet of the 2nd I received with great pleasure. I can assure you the sketches you sent me are very acceptable to the young ladies here. I was beginning to think you had forgot me altogether amidst all your gaiety. I was very glad indeed to learn that my mother was no worse, and all the rest in good condition. They would enjoy their Edinburgh jaunt very much, I daresay, if the weather was fine. It is now nearly a fortnight that we have been at rest as to the reduction*; you would observe in the papers how far it was to come down. We were saved only on account of their being Highland regiments (those above 90). No other idea was entertained but that we would remain here all winter. Various are the changes that take place, and particularly in a military life. We are now under orders for the West Indies. Jamaica is our destination, but when is not yet known. It is, however, thought that we will get orders to march on the arrival of some of the troops from France to relieve this regiment. The Doctor would have preferred remaining in Ireland if it had been so ordered; but upon the whole is not much averse to it; he is fond of a warm climate, and early in the spring is the best time to arrive in the West Indies, so that one gets inured to the climate before the warm weather sets in. Some of the officers rejoice at the idea of it. Some, I suppose, will exchange, but in general they have no objections. Our servant was in terror about the reduction, and now he is as much so about going abroad. As to myself, I am neither glad nor sorry. I am going, it is true, far, far from friends and home, to sojourn in a foreign land; but wherever I go the remembrance of that home will cheer me and be the subject of many a thought and conversation. My mother I am sure will be sorry and uneasy at the thought of it, but that God who watches over me here will protect me elsewhere, and will never forsake those who trust sincerely in Him. I may be thankful to Him that I have such a husband, who studies everything for my comfort and happiness, and deserves, indeed, all my love and gratitude. He regrets nothing so much as losing his hospital surgeon, who is unwilling to go out. He is a decent, sober, attentive man, and one that he

*The reduction of certain regiments after the end of the Napoleonic wars. Infantry regiments were officially known by their numbers.

can place great dependence on—who looks as much to the doctor's interests as to his own. He will be a very great loss to him indeed. I am very sorry too, to lose Mrs Brewster. She is a very nice woman, and very willing and anxious to serve one. They intend going to reside at Galashiels. Most of her friends are there. I suppose he will have a pension, having been more than twenty years in the service. I suppose we shall sail from Cork; it will be twelve days' march for the regiment. There will be only two ladies besides myself. Mrs Winchester and I will remain here after they leave this for some days, so that we will have time to reach Cork about the time they do. I don't think we shall go by Dublin; we will take the coach as far as it runs, and post the rest of the way. If it be such weather as it is now it will be very pleasant. I don't think anything of such a journey; no more than going to Edinburgh. I think I shall have had a good view of Ireland then from north to south and east to west. If we keep our health it will be a great increase to our income, which will make us more comfortable on our return. I don't know whether five years or seven is the limited time for regiments in the West Indies. It will soon pass away, and I pray to God that in the end I may find you all as I left you at home—not that I mean you young branches to be in a single state. No, I hope by that time you will all be comfortably settled with the objects of your affections. Be of good heart, I hope we shall all have a Christmas dinner in the old dining room yet. I don't know where I may be next Christmas, but I shall have the consolation to know that on that day at least I will be in your thoughts. Kenyon's regiment is there. Perhaps it may be removed on our arrival. Little did we think when we shook hands in our little parlour that in so short a time we should both be destined to such a distant quarter. If I was to meet him there how astonished he would look. The Doctor's old 61st is there too, where he will have the pleasure of meeting all his old friends. You must write me immediately on the receipt of this, as we may go in less than a month, and we may not go for two or more, but in all probability it will be soon. Be sure and write, and if you can send me any more sketches you may. I intend, if I have time, painting a pair of skreens for Mrs Bustead (who has been uncommonly kind and attentive) as a small return. There is no good drawing paper to be had, and no varnish. I was told to-day by a young lady that varnish may be made with spirits of wine and gum arabic, which I am going to try for my skreens. I intend sending to Dublin for some white velvet to paint a ridicule if I can find out the secret of it. I have finished the spencer I was making, which is very much admired. The upper part is tucked pretty near together and corded—you know, at equal distances, one time the tucks laid up and the other down. A

A soldier of the 92nd Regiment in 1814-1815

—From a contemporary print by Finart

trimming put round in the middle and pulled in below. I am tracing a pattern on net for a frill, but I have so many things on hand I don't know when I will have it finished. I intend making my pretty little tippet like yours you know, the upper part of a spencer. I think it the best plan, as I never can wear it. We will have a great many things to provide for this intended voyage. I had some young ladies calling on me to-day with Mrs Winchester, when we had it all discussed what we should take. They were advising us not to give out the little things to black women to nurse else they would imbibe all their bad qualities, even their likeness—flat noses, thick lips, etc. They would, I am sure, have no objections to accompany us, even with an ensign, as many of the ladies in Castlebar would do. They live in the country a little way, are five daughters, the eldest I have not seen, being on a visit somewhere. They are very pleasant girls. I think I mentioned them to you before; their name is White. Their father is supervisor or something of that kind. We have not visited there yet. I have called twice with Mrs W. The custom here when you make a forenoon call is to produce a large tray (in the country I mean) with bread, butter, wine, jam, apples, etc.; when you get the jam handed to you on small plates with a spoon to sup to your bread. The Misses White draw a little, and are very fond of getting any patterns. They thought Belle's pinchusion very pretty, and one of them has copied it. I have been learning a new way of purses from Mrs W. If I have time when I write again I will enclose a little bit; you will perhaps be so ingenious as to find it out. It is done on a block, such as I did my father's button-hole one on, with gold thread or silver, and any colored silk you choose. You may send me any patterns for work you can spare or have time to copy, such as those Margaret Veitch had; they will be useful to me. I have drawn several to these ladies from recollection, but am now at a loss for more. You would be astonished to see your poem of Hibernia in the *Constitution*. I gave it to Miss Drought, who got it put into the paper. She is fond of these things and keeps a book where she pastes them or cuts from newspapers. We spent Hallow-ee'n with Mrs Sricket (the last of October); we drank tea, eat apples, drank toddy, nuts of course, supped on roast ducks, stewed apples, and plum tart, and were regaled with a glass of wine. The old lady was just like my mother, very kind and very much interested about us. She is so sorry on the thoughts of us going so soon after she thought she had her family fairly settled for the winter. The Doctor has been doing what he could to procure a pension for her, her husband having been a quarter-master in a dragoon regiment. She has not yet had a final answer, but is in great hopes that the Lord Lieutenant will grant it. If she succeeds she may bless the day

the Doctor came to Castlebar. There is a grand supper promised on the happy occasion, which, it is hoped, will arrive before we leave this. There is an order for all officers on leave to be at headquarters on the 1st of December, so we will not, it is probable, go before that period.

You will recollect the Mr Wallace, Miss Campbell of Kailree [Kailzie ?] was to have got. The Doctor has seen him, and Captain Ferrier, of this regiment, is intimately acquainted with him. His mother and sister live in Belfast, and his uncle has a property near Carrickfergus. From every circumstance, I think it must be the same person. We spoke of it to Captain Ferrier, who said he understood he was to have been married, and that he had met with a disappontment, a fine get off, the disappointment was, I presume, on the other side; it is said he is a very fast young man. I suppose poor Caroline has returned single. Mungo Campbell and she can't do better than make a match of it. What do you think ? I have no less than got a Spanish grammar to-day to begin the study of that fashionable language. I don't think it will, by any means, be difficult. I have the Doctor to instruct me, who is a proficient. It will be a good amusement on board ship, and I hope to be mistress of it before I get to Jamaica. Miss Drought is coming on very well with the French; if I had remained I would very soon have had great credit of my scholar. She is most anxious to learn, and when that is the case, there is no fear of a person succeeding in anything. I regret I did not bring my Italian book with me; had I known of this move I would have brought a great many things I left. I trust to you to take care of my shifts and coarse nightshirts that I did not bring with me, and not allow *Poll* to finger them, as she was threatening to do. Tell my mother, too, not to forget to set apart a large chest and pop in anything she makes. I expect it will be crammed before my return, so that I may have a fine providing to take to Shawwood. After being in a warm climate we will require an immense quantity of sheets and blankets to keep us warm. I'll tell you a good plan: should you overcome all your scruples about Father Phaidrick*, and yet make him happy, you know he has a well-furnished house, full of everything, just transfer your share to poor me, and that will be acting a generous part. If he gets *you* he will be blest, and wish for nothing more. I forgot to mention to you in my former letter anything concerning Ker and Mrs Fitzgerald. Shortly after the affair took place he pretended to take it so much to heart that *he* refused to live, and it was said he actually took no

*Apparently a nickname for the Rev. James Pate, minister of Innerleithen. He got married, though not to Catherine Cairns, in 1824 when in his seventies.

sustenance for a week, at the end of which period he took poison and finished himself; this, however, all ended in smoke. The case is to be tried at the Assises at Ballinrach very soon. It is not expected that the damages will be laid high, as the gentlemen of the country rather favor him, from all accounts. She was as much to blame as he, perhaps more. She is going to England, and Captain Fitzgerald has sold all the furniture of the house the other day. I don't know where he goes. She has left a fine family of five children, the youngest five months old. I was at the auction with Mrs and Miss Bustead. It is a as sweet a little place as I ever saw; in summer I think it must be quite a paradise. The house is in the cottage style, with windows to the floors, very small but neat, and has been very nicely furnished. It is three or four miles from Castlebar. We had a very pleasant drive, the day being delightful. The Doctor dined yesterday at the mess (the General being here inspecting some men who are to be discharged); he drank rather too much wine, and I assure you has suffered for it since—not to say he was tipsy, only a little gay. He has no enjoyment in more than three glasses; any more hurts him. The Doctor made a will about four years ago; the marriage contract could not of course be mentioned in it. He wishes to know if it will be binding on the executors; if not, he intends making another. You must ask my father, and be sure and let me know when you write. The enclosed you must send to Selkirk. The Doctor has got it written with a great exertion. He is so ill, he was not out of bed the whole forenoon, and is now gone to it again. I think it will prevent his exceeding his three glasses in future. He has directed Thomas to send any letters to Peebles, when you will be so good as forward them by Mr Kerr. You will not trouble him now much longer, as I suppose he can't frank out of Britain. Should you have written me before this letter comes, you must send it immediately in case we should be off. I have sent you a Dublin paper by this post—the last in all probability you will receive of that kind. I am glad to hear you have such a plentiful crop, and got in in such good condition. I have no chance now of partaking of your flour scones. Tell Nancy not to say anything against Williamson; perhaps he is destined for her. I think it very probable, and should not be surprised to hear of it. Bell would, I am sure, enjoy her jaunt to Alloa very much; it was very like the *daft gawkies,* you may tell them, to set off in such a way. It was suspected, you know, that Mrs Robertson and family would return to Peebles. I am sure she will be very glad, but *waes me* Mary and Ann will have no chance of getting off in Peebles. Janet is, I think, as daft as ever. Who is the young man she comes looking after? You will be very dashing in your new pelisse. I don't think I shall trim mine; I shall have

no use of it where I am going. I cannot conceive why Mrs Anderson refused the gloves; perhaps she thought she was neglected and the others got theirs before. I saw Mr Smith's marriage in the papers. He has not laid his disappointment much to heart. You say nothing of Mr Buchanan and Christie Burnett. I suppose there is no truth in it; she would not, I think, suit him. I think I see Miss Betty *elbowing* across the room to point out Peebles, with a long stick on the map. I wonder her mother did not think it *o'er costly*. I perhaps do the good girl injustice, but I am afraid it is a little above her comprehension. Her father is an *able* hand to bring her on. You recollect the *dissertation* he gave us about the *whales* or something of that kind; a perfect speaking *trumpet*. We got a most magnificent present of apples the other day. The clergyman of the English Church sent for the Doctor one day to draw a tooth for his wife. Before he got there, however, she was a good deal relieved, and deferred the operation. The Doctor declined receiving any compensation of course, but was repaid by 300 fine apples; most of them eating apples, and most delightful—*half pears, half apples*, you would think. We are not acquainted, at least *I* never met with them; their cottage is in the country about a mile from this. I have learned just now that Kerr is in jail here. He was on bail, but owing to some informality he is laid up—it is a sad business. The Doctor is rather dull on the thoughts of the West Indies. He was saying this morning that he would prefer Father Phadraich's situation, as minister of Innerleithen, to anything else. That would be his highest ambition, or that of Manor. He seems to have a great partiality for that bleak place. He is a perfect epicure in tea drinking. I suppose we will be under the necessity of laying in a chest for the West Indies; it seems there it is a guinea a pound. That quantity scarcely serves us two or three weeks, once a day; you may judge how black it is. He endeavors to console himself with the idea of returning to dear Shawwood and ending his days in peace and quiet. I can't say I am under any great apprehensions as to the climate or anything else. I am resigned to any fate wherever we go. 'Will you go to the Indies, my Katie', that is the Doctor's favorite song now. He tells me that if the climate does not agree with me he will dispatch me in a vessel to Greenock, so you need not be surprised if I pop in on you some day, 'meagre and pale, the ghost of what I was'. He hopes your *Buira* handkerchief still holds out, and that you take particular care of it. He is still wearing the sleeve of the same shirt as one, a great favourite. He is so careful of it that he will not allow it to go to a washing with the rest of the things, but must be washed in the basin by my *fair hand*. He has given a hint in the Dublin paper to you and Bell on a certain subject, which I hope sin-

cerely will not be lost on either of you. He promises you a most splendid dinner at Shawwood on his return, which he will then be better enabled to give, on condition that you have changed in certain opinions and exerted yourself in my behalf, as to the *grand* providing. I hope John Marshall may be so fortunate as to get the pension; it depends on the report of the Medical Board whether they think they are entitled or not. I suppose only if they have wounds at the time they are inspected equal to the loss of a limb. Some have pensions for a while and then withdrawn, as is the case with Lieutenant Cameron for the loss of his little finger. This regiment as well as the 93rd may thank the 92nd for being kept up, the two latter being Highland they could not reduce the one without the other. Had it not been for the gallant 92nd the reduction would have gone down to the 90th. The people here are only raising their potatoes; it is very different from Scotland, they have no fear of frost coming on early. We have had four most delightful days, a little frosty—the best weather we have had since I came to Castlebar. I got some of the best tea to-day that this town affords, at no less than 10s. per lb. The Doctor is even so plain as to tell people that he can't take their tea; they don't make it half strong, nor give it a good enough heat. We will get coffee and rum in perfection where we are going. The poor Doctor only broke his fast this morning for two nights and a day, owing to his debauch; he was indeed very ill last night, but this morning is greatly better. He had not so much, I am sure, as three-quarters of a bottle. He had dined at six, and was home about 10, so he had not time to drink much. We had one of the greatest exquisites in the regiment the other night with a few others at an oyster feast. He is quite a dandy, a Mr Peat, I think I mentioned him to you before. He is full of mirth and glee, and in great spirits about going to the West Indies. I understand Kingston is a large town, containing 36,000 inhabitants. A very gay place I am told. We are rather at a loss what articles to take out with us—what things will be cheap there and what dear. We may perhaps send home for some things by-and-bye. Now I beg you will write me whenever you receive this, giving me all the information I wish to know. I will write you again from this before we go, and then from Cork before we embark; and before the end of this year many changes will have taken place since the last—my Uncle Anderson gone and that family all dispersed, and I perhaps far, far distant. I may here say now:—

'Where e'er I go, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly clings to thee.
Still to my sister clings with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain'.

I don't recollect whether it was Jamaica where Veitch was, if so, he will give you some idea of it. Make my compliments to them both. This is a long letter, and I am sure not an unwelcome one. I will write you the *news* from Jamaica. Remember me to all the good folks at Firknow, and the Pillarians (nothing but changes); also the Campbell family. Congratulate her from me on her increasing family. It would be a sin to omit poor Miss Somers, Mrs Williamson—it would be endless to enumerate them all—those who are interested in me. Don't forget *old Kate*. I don't think I shall see her again in this world. I daresay many of Mr Sloan's* boys were from Jamaica; perhaps I might meet with some of them. If Mr Fullarton had been in Peebles, you might have got an idea from him of what things it would be necessary to take out. Remember me in the warmest manner to my father and mother, Bell and Nancy, and accept, my dear Cath, the fervent wishes for the welfare and happiness of you all. The Doctor joins me in kind love; and believe me, my dear sister, yours affectionately,

ANNE ANDERSON.

Jamaica is 1,300 miles farther than Barbadoes or any other of the Islands. Send the two enclosed letters by Post. If you are sending anything to Stockbridge, you might send Mungo's with it, but the other dispatch immediate; but I will send a Castlebar paper to-morrow.

* * *

FERMOY, 26th January, 1819.

My dear Mrs Park,

I am very much disappointed at not receiving a letter from you or some of your good family. I please myself with the hope that there is one on the way for me. I have written Bell Anderson twice, and sorry am I to perceive that she is as little attached to letter writing as ever. However, one of my letters might have been lost, as I am not sure whether it was enclosed in one to Peebles, which they never received. I intend sending this by Mrs Brewster, whom I mentioned to you before. You will receive also a pinchusion, which I beg Elizabeth's acceptance of. It was given me by a lady in Castlebar. It is done in what they call rice paper, cut out and pasted on. I must now give you a detail of my journey to this place, where I arrived on Friday, the 22nd. The regiment left Castlebar on the 8th and 9th of January. The Doctor did not go for two days after, when he took the coach so far, which saved him two days'

*The master of Peebles Grammar School, who took boarders.

march. He only walked three or four days in all. His feet blistered so much that he was not able to continue. They got dreadfully stormy weather the whole way. I felt very lonely at Castlebar. I was a week there after the Doctor left me. The first three days I was confined to bed with, I daresay, a fever of cold. I was much afraid of typhus fever, and that I would not be able to follow at the time appointed. However, I got quite well before the end of the week. I travelled in company with a young lady who had been on a visit to Castlebar, and was going to Tralee round by Cork. We jogged on very well together. We posted 90 miles Irish, more than a hundred English. Posting is much cheaper here than in Scotland. For one or two persons it is 1/1 a mile; for three, 1/4. Drivers are paid at the rate of 2d a mile. I don't think it cost us any more than if we had gone in the coach. We performed a journey of 40 miles the first day. Slept at Galway, a very large town; but being almost dark when we got in, and setting off before breakfast again, we saw very little of it. We got to Ennis next day, about 33 miles from Galway. My travelling companion had acquaintances there, who, as soon as they knew she was arrived, came to the inn, and insisted on us going to their house for tea, where we remained all night and next day and night. They were a very pleasant family, and remarkably kind. Ennis is a very nice little town; but the day did not prove at all favorable for walking out much. We only had a parade through some of the streets between showers. Next day brought us to Limerick, 22 miles farther, a very large town, a good deal resembling Edinburgh, and I think as large, if I may judge from the streets we passed through. We were quite in style I do assure you. We drove to one of the first hotels, but it was in order to be in readiness in the morning for the Cork coach, which starts from that place at 6 o'clock. Upon the whole, I think in these respectable houses you have everything as moderate as in the inferior houses; everything good, and served with the utmost dispatch. We drank tea at the postmaster's. The young lady with me had some business to transact with him. She had never seen him before. He was so very pressing for us to stay to tea, that we could not withstand his solicitations. Had we not been going off early in the morning, we would have been obliged to stay to supper. We were even invited to dinner next day, had we remained. There were his wife, a young gentleman, and two young ladies; I don't know whether his son and daughters. It was a very splendid house, something like those in Forth Street. When I got to Limerick, I found a letter lying for me from the Doctor, telling me the regiment had got a route to Fermoy in place of Cork, there to wait the arrival of transports. The mail from Limerick to Cork goes one day through Fermoy and the other

A case of surgical instruments of the period 1808-1820

day a different road. However, it fortunately happened that it went by this place the day for which I had taken my seat. It is about 36 miles from Limerick to this. I got here by one o'clock, where I found our servant waiting my arrival to conduct me to my home. It is the neatest little town this that I have seen in Ireland. The houses are all regularly built, and the streets very well laid out. The country around is beautiful, and there is a very fine river runs almost through the middle of the town, over which there is a very handsome bridge. There is a good deal of wood on the banks of the river, which in summer must be enchanting, together with a great many gentlemen's seats, which adorn the surrounding county. The barracks are very extensive, situated on the top of a bank overlooking the town. The rooms are very comfortable. An officer is allowed a very good sitting room, a bedroom adjoining, and a kitchen. I should have liked very well to have been in barracks rather than lodgings; but not having the necessary furniture, it was not worth while, for the short time we will be here, to make any arrangements for that purpose. Only one of the ladies has taken up her quarters there—Mrs Winchester—who likes it very well. Mr and Mrs Thomas—the assistant surgeon and his wife—arrived here the same day that I did. She had only been confined a month, when she left home in the north of Ireland, where she had gone for the purpose. It was not expected that she would have been able to go out to Jamaica at this time; but the regiment not sailing so soon as was at first said, has left her time get stout, so as to undertake the voyage. I was told she was the prettiest woman in Ireland, but I was very much disappointed. She is a sweet modest looking woman, but no beauty. We will soon have married ladies enough in the regiment. A Captain Donaldson arrived the other day, who has got into the regiment. He is married to an English woman, and has one child. She has not yet arrived. Captain Wilkie and his lady are at Cork. They get into debt everywhere they go, and are skulking now, not daring to show their faces here for fear of being arrested. It will perhaps be a long time before you receive this letter. If the Doctor has time, he will write Mungo before we sail. We don't know how long we may be here yet. Now, my dear Mrs Park, only think what a treat it will be to have a letter from you in Jamaica. In pity, stir up Bell and Elizabeth to write me. You may write about a month after you see by the papers that we have sailed. It may, perhaps, be there as soon as ourselves. Write everything you can think of. Cross it and re-cross it if you please. The smallest thing will be interesting to us. When Mungo writes the Doctor, he does not give him any news. I am glad to hear Barbara Laidlaw is something better. I have been enquiring in two or three letters if Bess Smithson is in Selkirk

yet. Tell me all about her when you write. The officers have been arranging matters to-day about laying in their stock for the voyage. It will cost the Doctor £18 for himself and £5 for me. We have been spending money here at a fine rate, many things we will require being double the price in the West Indies, such as shoes, stockings, muslins, and all these things. We have laid in what I think will be sufficient for two or three years, when, if we live in Jamaica, we will save the money, and bring home a fortune. What would you think ? I have no great ambition for it. I look forward to the time with pleasure when I hope to sit down at Shawwood to my porridge and potatoes. I have not seen porridge since I left home. When one is deprived of anything, how they value it. I would like a tasting now. The Doctor bids me tell you he has no great relish for going to Jamaica. If he had had £300, to build stable and barn at Shawwood, he would rather have gone on half pay than gone out. Should we be fortunate enough to return, I hope we shall spend many happy days there at least. I am inclined to look to the bright side of the picture. We don't expect to be more than three or four years there. I wish the voyage was over. I am afraid of sea-sickness terribly. Tell Mungo, from his uncle, to get as much money from his uncle Thomas as will purchase a feed of nub and daerbtrosh, to those who have fulfilled the duties of their diplomas. He is sorry to hear the account of the *Broll* having lost the grand state umbrella; Thomas and the Stuncher to have a piece extra for their good conduct. The book the Doctor intends writing on 'Prognostication in Jamaica', will be dedicated to his disciples—Elizabeth, Bolingbroke, and Mungo. He hopes they are improving, from the lessons they got from him at Stockbridge. The almanack came safe. The Doctor requests to be remembered to old Laidlaw's family. He wrote to Selkirk about Mr Oliphant's business, so Mungo will have nothing further to do in the affair.

(*Dr Anderson now writes.*) I hope the little antient shovel, poker and tongs are not knocking about the house, but hanging as clear as a looking-glass, so that Mungo is able to put on his neckcloth before them. When I return, I will look over such articles in the diplomas, to see that they are in good order. By the bye, how are my blankets ? I hope the moths are not at them. Thomas will pay you the £10 I owe you, also the eight shillings you paid on my account for books, whenever he has as much money of mine in his hands. This unexpected voyage has made me very low in money at present. I wrote James Rodgers two letters since I heard from him. I have now enclosed my will for Bell to keep. Mrs Brewster, who will bring this, was my nurse in hospital. She is a very decent woman. Ask her to tea.

(*His wife now resumes.*) There is a very handsome house here, beautifully situated on the bank of the river, quite close to the town, which belongs to a Mr Anderson. He came originally from Dumfries; a pedlar, or something of that sort. After he settled here, he began some speculation in herrings, and from one thing to another acquired an immense fortune. He was the first that established mail coaches in Ireland. A bank in Fermoy was also set on foot by him. He has a son—Sir George Anderson—who married a lady with a great fortune, and who possesses a magnificent castle in this neighbourhood. The father, however, failed a few years ago. I don't know whether he had engaged too deeply in speculation or not, and brought in a great many poor people, who had money in the bank. He has now retrieved matters, and last year paid £20,000 to these poor people who had suffered by him. He keeps his carriage, and lives in great style. He has been very fortunate; but I suppose he has been an enterprising persevering man. You must excuse all my wanderings in this letter. I go from one thing to another, as they come into my head. We will have three transports out. I will be in headquarters' ship; the only lady on board. We can be better accommodated separate than together.

(*Dr A. writes.*) How is my spreckled hen ?—the intended population of Shawwood. I seldom see a large egg, but I think of one of hers. I hear the inspector's cheeks are swelling out with the delicious and savoury morsels eliminated from her corporal system.

* * *

Up Park Camp, Jamaica,

21st June, 1819.

My dear Jane,

It is now more than a fortnight that we have been fairly settled in Jamaica, which, as yet, none of us are very partial to. We sailed from Cove on the 16th April, and landed here on the 2nd June, which was considered a good passage. We had most beautiful weather, not a gale of wind to ruffle the surface of the wide ocean, but a fine steady breeze, which carried us on at the rate of 180 miles sometimes a day. I was very sick for a whole fortnight, not able to leave my bed. The Doctor did not suffer so much as he used to do. He was only ill two days. We had very good accommodation on board ship; a neat small cabin to ourselves, which contained our bed and all our baggage, and where I could sit and work, which was more agreeable for me, being the only female on board. Our party consisted of 12 officers, all very agreeable and happy. The

three transports kept always in sight of each other, and sometimes came alongside of us in an evening to have a tune, as we had the band with us. We were much disappointed that we did not touch at Madeira. It was fully intended; but somehow we passed it without knowing. We, however, went on shore at one of the Canary Islands, belonging to Spain. The inhabitants speak Spanish, and in their manners and customs are altogether as much so as in the middle of Spain. I returned on board highly delighted with my visit and with the civility of the people, who showed us every attention. We passed a good many of the West Indian Islands, but none of them very closely. The peak of Teneriffe too presented itself to our view, the top of it rising majestically above the clouds. It was certainly a very grand object, and seldom seen at sea. I can't say I was much impressed in favor of Jamaica from its first appearance. My spirits were not very much elated the evening before we landed; sitting on deck viewing the island. It was a melancholy reflection, to think how many hundreds of us were about to go on shore, and how few might ever leave it again, or ever see their native country more. We disembarked very early in the morning, before the heat of the day, and proceeded immediately up to the Camp here, about two miles from Kingston.

* * *

UP PARK CAMP, JAMAICA,

31st August, 1819.

My dear Bell,

You must allow that I am of a very forgiving disposition, to address you once more after your seeming neglect. I will, however, do you the justice to say that it proceeds more from your aversion to letter writing than from any want of friendship, I am confident. I will, therefore, pronounce you incorrigible, and drop the subject for one more interesting, and that is to announce to you the birth of a lovely little girl. The great event took place on Sunday, 15th August. The Doctor was disappointed it was not a son born on the birthday of the great Napoleon. He was sure in that case he would have been a hero, but now he is very well satisfied with the little Miss. I was not very ill; from 12 on the Saturday night I was not very well, and did not sleep, but nothing so serious as to prevent the Doctor from sleeping soundly. During the forenoon of Saturday I got worse, and the child was born at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I was not very ill for more than an hour and a-half. I had nobody with me but the hospital surgeon's wife and the servant. The former came two or three times to dress the child. She is a

pretty little infant, thriving very well. She will be, I think, very like Nancy—she has her eyes and nose exactly. If she is spared she will be the flower of the forest, her father says. He is very fond of her. She is a darling infant when she does not cry; but she has had a sore mouth, which has fretted her a good deal. I have recovered very well myself; it is now sixteen days since, and I am as stout as ever. Had I been at home I suppose I would have been creeping from one room to another, muffled up in blankets. Here I was up on the 5th day and laid by a washing. We can't call a servant from the kitchen as at home. We have only two rooms, and the servants only come at stated times. I would have been afraid to have made so free at home, but I am thankful I have not been the worse of anything yet. My little lassie is not christened yet; I don't know when it will take place. I am told they charge about £7 English for performing that ceremony here. She will be a namesake of yours. The Doctor does not like it, but I think I ought to assert my right; unless there was very good reasons for yielding—you will agree with me, I am sure. I wish we were all home in a bundle; the prospect is melancholy in the extreme here—nothing but death and desolation amongst us. The mortality for about six weeks past has been truly awful. You have no idea of the state we are in. The Doctor has a miserable life indeed, and God knows I have an anxious one. We have already lost 130 men, 3 officers, 13 women and the same number of children. The officers are Lieutenant Colonel Blainey, who has left a widow with three or four children. She did not come out with him; he had just got a year's leave on account of delicate health to go home when he was taken ill. Lieutenant McDonald and Adjutant Mackie, the latter a most excellent young man, and the Doctor's most particular friend. He is most universally lamented by the whole regiment. He was only forty-eight hours ill. His friends live in Edinburgh; his mother is a widow, an old woman, and was very, very partial to this son. He expressed great fears on his death-bed as to the effect the news of his death would have upon her. The Doctor has just been writing his mother communicating the melancholy intelligence. Mr Thomas, the assistant-surgeon, is now dangerously ill, and his child of eight months is dying. A great many of our officers have been ill, but have recovered, except these three. The 50th regiment, which arrived here three months previous to the 92nd, have suffered dreadfully. Had they not been moved from here some weeks ago they would have been extirpated to a man—whole families are swept away. In the 50th there was a Captain and Mrs Montgomery, their son, Major Montgomery, their daughter and son-in-law, Dr Brown, and his infant child have all been swept away in the short space of one month. Mrs Brown and Miss

Montgomery now alone remain. The adjutant lost a daughter about seventeen and a little boy; now he has gone himself. Mrs North has lost her husband and one of her children; the quarter-master a daughter about eighteen. Colonel Hill died yesterday. The 50th have lost in all about 10 officers, 200 men, 23 women, and as many children. A great part of this regiment is now removed to different places, but we remain, of course, where the hospital is. God knows how it will end, but the prospect is dismal enough now. The 61st have only lost three officers in two and a-half years, and not a single lady. I write my mother by this packet. I have not drawn such a melancholy picture to her; I am afraid, however, I have said more than will make her unhappy. If we escape this we may expect more healthy seasons in time to come. There has not been such a fatal year in Jamaica since 1793. In Kingston there has been great sickness, for the most part confined to new comers; few, if any of whom recovered. It has now almost ceased there.

(*Dr Anderson now writes.*) My dear Mungo,—The young Anderson is a perfect beauty. I intend soon to introduce her to the 'taws', and to inculcate the doctrines of the divine Boston on her youthful mind. I foretold its birth six months ago to take place on the anniversary of that of the great Napoleon, another hero to conquer, the which I persuaded myself into; and when 12 o'clock of the evening of the 14th, your aunt began to bawl out *'Vive L'Empereur', Napoleon troiseme veimqueur de l'Europe tres fois.*

But lo! in place of Napoleon a Josephine was born. Tell Elizabeth that I wished to call her after her, but her mother will not consent, so I think she will answer for a wife to you. The mortality here has been awful; one week I believe out of 300 men who were well on Sunday 53 were buried before the next. I am terribly harassed. I wonder how I live; but, sir, the appetite continues, which is a good sign. Tell Topas and Beatty that they have a beautiful little Creole Cousin in Jamaica. I wrote of her last packet. Write me soon. The regiment is sent to another quarter to see if the change will stop the sickness. I remain here with the Hospital. Tell Bolingbroke that I expect *Boston's* fourfold state and questions from him for Josephine. I will give her new motives and make her feel the taws soon.

September 1st, 1819.

(*Mrs Anderson continues*). I have just been in to see poor Mrs Thomas. Her child is going to die. I mentioned him to you before. He is the first dead I ever looked upon. I don't know when I will get him out of my head. It is a happy change for him, poor lamb; he has suffered a great deal for a month past. She is a young, delicate creature, and is in terrible distress.

It is doubtful whether her husband will recover. If he goes I am afraid it will kill her. If we survive this I expect soon to hear from you. I wrote Mrs Park by the first packet from here. I expect soon to have an answer with all the news from her. I would give something now to be at Stockbridge. All in good time, I hope we shall yet meet and be happy together.

You must excuse this letter, written in a great hurry. Our servant's husband is taken ill, and moved from here. Of course she has left us, and it is only when *Josephine* is asleep that I have managed to get this letter put together. We have a very useful black boy, who can nurse her nicely, when he happens to be at hand. I don't know what we would have done without him, as owing to the sickness and death, the other ladies have been very ill off for servants. Mrs Captain Donaldson had a daughter three weeks before me; she has another boy, more than two years old. Mrs Winchester, who was married a month or two before me, has no family or any appearance. Captain W's company has left this, and she is gone to town to some of her acquaintances. Mrs Donaldson has met with a lady here with whom she was educated. She has been like a mother to her. She is now in the country with her. Only Mrs Thomas and I are in these fatal barracks, and Mrs Major Wilkie, whom I don't know. She has also lost a child here. I am afraid to think what may be the fate of my little darling were anything to be the matter with us. I will hope the best, and indulge as little as possible in these melancholy reflections. I trust my next letter will not wear such a doleful aspect. The happy days we hope to enjoy at home will make us forget all this. Make my kind love to Mrs Park, your mother, Mungo, Eliza, and the boys, and accept for yourself, my dear Bell, the unalterable esteem of your sincere friend,

ANNE ANDERSON.

(*Continued by Dr Anderson.*) My dear Nieces,—You never beheld such a pretty creature as your little Cousin here, though not three weeks old. I fancy she will soon speak. She looks so *auld farrant*. When she was born I thought I saw the *dumpy* Miss Betsy's nose, but I was disappointed: she promises to be as tall as you. I hope you will not forget a question book for her. I thought I would have a young Napoleon, but she proved a *Josephine*. She never gets another name. I hope you will send her a new frock. As yours is a favorite name of mine, I wished to call her Elizabeth. Your loving Uncle,

A. ANDERSON.

* * *

(Letter from Dr Anderson, undated, and with no address.)

This being the first letter I ever wrote you, I am at a loss how to commence it; indeed I find it no easy matter when I reflect on what I have to communicate. Well, shall I tell you, or shall I forbear. Come, let us mingle our tears and join in our lamentations. My beloved wife, your dear affectionate sister, is no more. I have not words to express what I feel on this melancholy occasion. She was, indeed, dear to my heart. The longer we were united the stronger our affections and mutual attachment became, and worthy was she of my fondest regards. It is needless for me, when writing to you, who knew her amiable disposition, to dwell upon her many virtues. Her constant study was to please; never did hear a murmur from her lips, or behold a frown upon her countenance. We were happy in ourselves, and the birth of our darling babe was to us both a source of much joy. Often used we to anticipate pleasure to come on our retiring to Shawwood, and in imagination beheld our dear child running about the door. But how soon are our fondest hopes and wishes blasted for ever! It is the will of God, and it is our duty to submit. Oh, how my heart bleeds when I think upon my dear Anne, and when I look at our little innocent I burst into a flood of tears; the dear creature insensible to its loss. Had you but seen what a fond mother my beloved was, calling upon me often to look at the infant smiling. This, however, is too much for me. I shall now give you some account of her lamented illness. On the morning of the 11th September I went early on board ship at Port Royal to visit Mrs Winchester, whom I found had died the night previous. When on board I felt unwell, and immediately proceeded home. On entering our bedroom I said to her, 'Anne, I am afraid that at last I have got the fever', and requested her to cut off my hair and send for a doctor. She was much affected and anxious about me, as every one about us was dying. Mr and Mrs Thomas (my assistant) had died the week before. I continued very ill until the morning of the 14th, when I found myself out of danger. Oh, with what affection she watched over me. I shall never forget it. About 9 o'clock on the morning of the 14th, I said to her, 'I fear that you are not well'. She replied that she did not feel quite well. I requested her to go to bed and send for a doctor. On the morning of the 16th Major Ferier advised me strongly to send her to Kingstown, where she could get into larger rooms—lodgings. I asked her if she wished to go. 'I will do anything for the best', my love replied, with inexpressible mildness, for she was mildness itself. At the time I saw that removing her would be of no use, as the cold hand of death was upon her; yet I was ready to grasp at any chance of preserving her. I came over the bed to see her once more, and could not refrain

weeping when I looked at her. 'Oh', says she, 'if you behave like that you will make me believe that I will not get better; but I hope I will get well, as I feel no pain, only a curious sensation in my head'. I durst not ask her if she had anything to say to you lest it might hurt her. She helped to dress herself, and when carried out of the room to be placed in the coach, she said, 'Be sure and write me often and tell me how you and the child get on', and these were the last words I heard my beloved wife speak. She felt no fatigue from the motion of the coach, and the woman who went with her told me that an hour after being in bed she felt easier, and said that the people were very kind and attentive. However, in the course of the afternoon of the 16th she became at times insensible, but suffered not the least pain, inquiring sometimes about me and the child, and expired without a groan between twelve and one o'clock on the morning of the 18th September. I was most anxious to be carried down to get another sight of my dearest wife, but the Doctor would not allow me.

Anne Anderson was buried in the Church of England Cemetery in Kingston. The yellow fever which cut short her happy married life is recorded in regimental history, and was one of the worst examples of the destruction of a regiment by disease; the casualties were terrible.

The Gordons remained in Jamaica until 1827, when having suffered more losses from fever, they came back to Scotland. On his return Andrew Anderson married again, his second wife being Georgina Graham, by whom he had two sons. In 1833 he retired from the army and settled in Minto Street in Edinburgh, where he died in 1860.

When she was nine months old Baby Anne was sent to Scotland with her nurse, to be cared for by her grandmother Mrs Cairns in Peebles. On the way there she stayed with her relations at Stockbridge, and Mungo Park, the explorer's eldest son, wrote to his uncle telling him of Anne's safe arrival. The little girl grew into an attractive woman, and captivated the young Peebles lawyer John Bathgate, who had watched her progress from childhood. They were married and had four children, but, like her mother, Anne did not live to see her family grow up; she died in 1851, after a long and painful illness. In 1863 John Bathgate, with his second wife and ten children, emigrated to New Zealand, where he had a very successful career. Towards the end of his life he recorded his reminiscences, and when extracts from his autobiography were printed for his family, these letters were included in the little book.

Walter Thomson, Printer, Selkirk

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